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LAST ISSUE:
WE WERE SPEAKING OF A SNOWBALL'S CHANCE IN HELL OR SOMETHING ALONG THOSE LINES.
BUT WHILE JOHNNY BLAZE FIGHTS A DESPERATE BATTLE FOR SURVIVAL AGAINST A POPULACE POSSESSED...
...SATAN IS ATTACKING HIM ON ANOTHER FRONT: TRYING TO WEAKEN ROXANNE SIMPSON'S PROTECTION OF SAID STUNT CYCLIST.

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YOU SEE, THE GHOST RIDER HAS SUDDENLY FOUND HIMSELF THE OBJECT OF AN ENTIRE CITY'S (SAN FRANCISCO) FEAR, COURTESY OF THE DEMON CALLED INFERNO.
INFERNO BEING THE ONE-EYED TERROR PICTURED BELOW...
FEAR
FEAR
IN SHORT, G.R. IS FACING THE GREATEST CRISIS OF HIS ENTIRE HELL-CURSED EXISTENCE... AND YOU ARE THERE!

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

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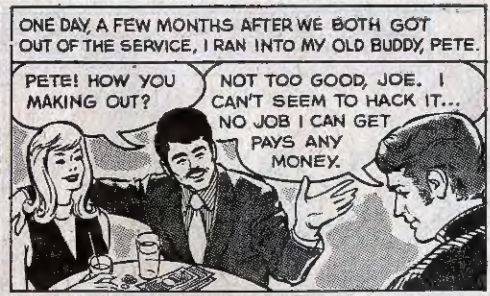
...when you get out of the service


ONE DAY, A FEW MONTHS AFTER WE BOTH GOT OUT OF THE SERVICE, I RAN INTO MY OLD BUDDY, PETE.
PETE! HOW YOU MAKING OUT?
NOT TOO GOOD, JOE. I CAN'T SEEM TO HACK IT... NO JOB I CAN GET PAYS ANY MONEY.

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CIE, PETE! CIE HELPED ME LEARN ELECTRONICS ON MY OFF DUTY HOURS--BY MAIL! IT'S THE SCIENCE OF THE SEVENTIES, MAN.

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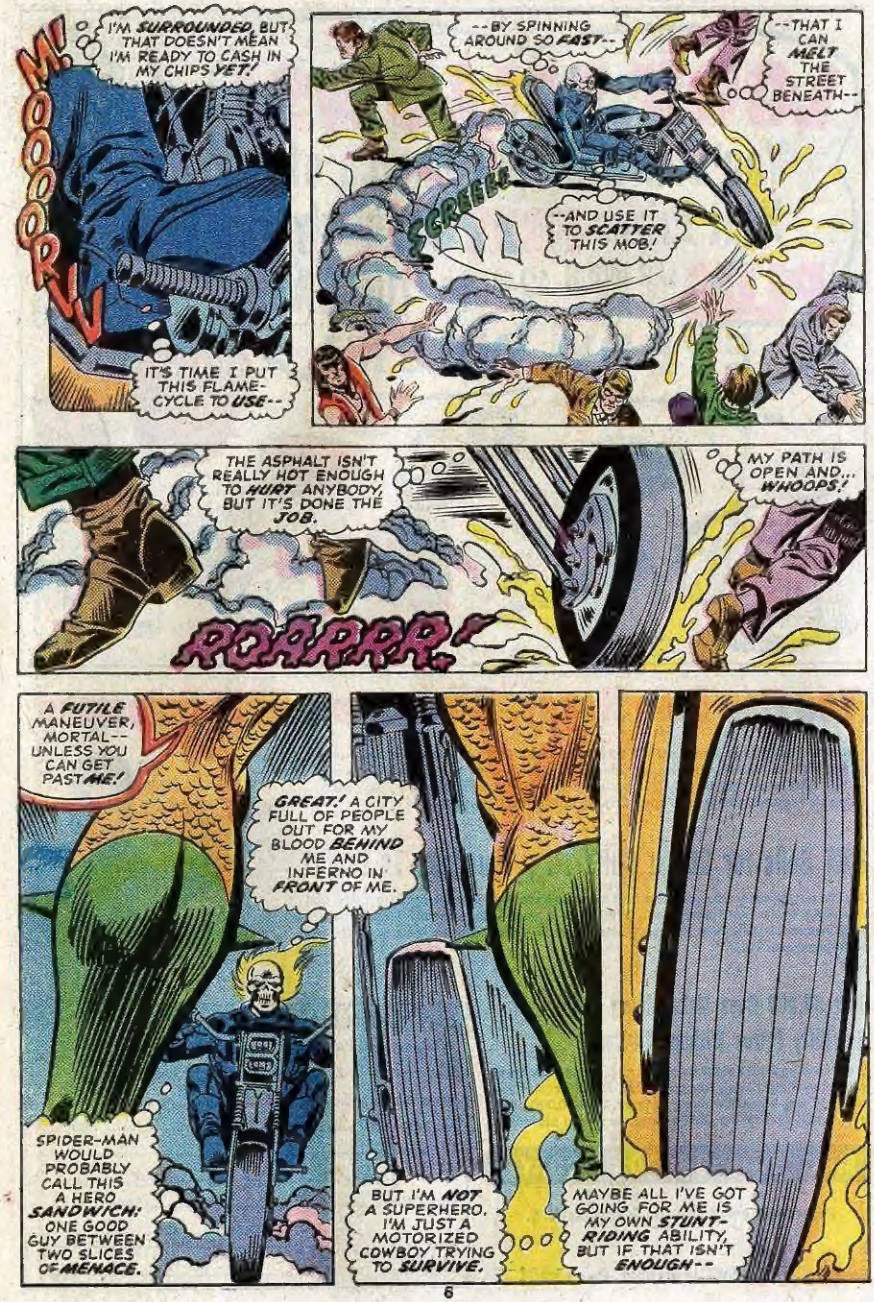
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MOOOORV
IT'S TIME I PUT THIS FLAME-CYCLE TO USE--
--BY SPINNING AROUND SO FAST--
--THAT I CAN MELT THE STREET BENEATH--
--AND USE IT TO SCATTER THIS MOB!
SCREEE
THE ASPHALT ISN'T REALLY HOT ENOUGH TO HURT ANYBODY, BUT IT'S DONE THE JOB.
MY PATH IS OPEN AND... WHOOPS!
ROARRR!
A FUTILE MANEUVER, MORTAL-- UNLESS YOU CAN GET PAST ME!
GREAT! A CITY FULL OF PEOPLE OUT FOR MY BLOOD BEHIND ME AND INFERNO IN FRONT OF ME.
SPIDER-MAN WOULD PROBABLY CALL THIS A HERO SANDWICH: ONE GOOD GUY BETWEEN TWO SLICES OF MENACE.
BUT I'M NOT A SUPERHERO. I'M JUST A MOTORIZED COWBOY TRYING TO SURVIVE.
MAYBE ALL I'VE GOT GOING FOR ME IS MY OWN STUNT-RIDING ABILITY, BUT IF THAT ISN'T ENOUGH--

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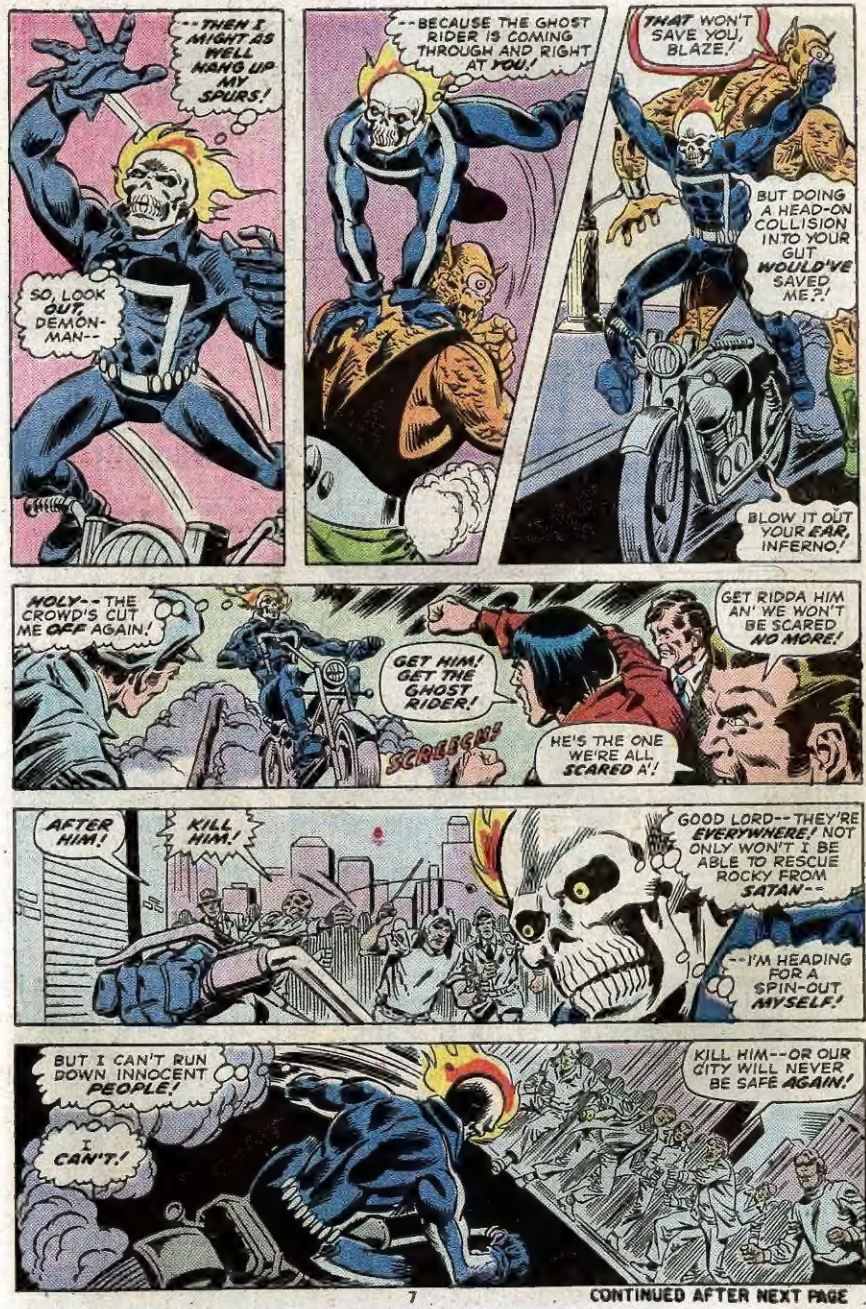
--THEN I MIGHT AS WELL HANG UP MY SPURS!
SO, LOOK OUT, DEMON-MAN--
--BECAUSE THE GHOST RIDER IS COMING THROUGH AND RIGHT AT YOU!
THAT WON'T SAVE YOU, BLAZE!
BUT DOING A HEAD-ON COLLISION INTO YOUR GUT WOULD'VE SAVED ME?!
BLOW IT OUT YOUR EAR, INFERNO!
HOLY--THE CROWD'S CUT ME OFF AGAIN!
GET HIM! GET THE GHOST RIDER!
SCREECH!
HE'S THE ONE WE'RE ALL SCARED A'!
GET RIDDA HIM AN' WE WON'T BE SCARED NO MORE!
AFTER HIM!
KILL HIM!
GOOD LORD--THEY'RE EVERYWHERE! NOT ONLY WON'T I BE ABLE TO RESCUE ROCKY FROM SATAN--
--I'M HEADING FOR A SPIN-OUT MYSELF!
BUT I CAN'T RUN DOWN INNOCENT PEOPLE!
I CAN'T!
KILL HIM--OR OUR CITY WILL NEVER BE SAFE AGAIN!

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

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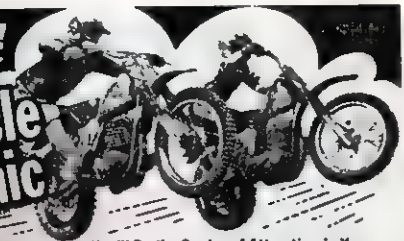

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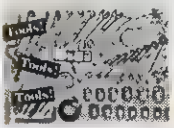

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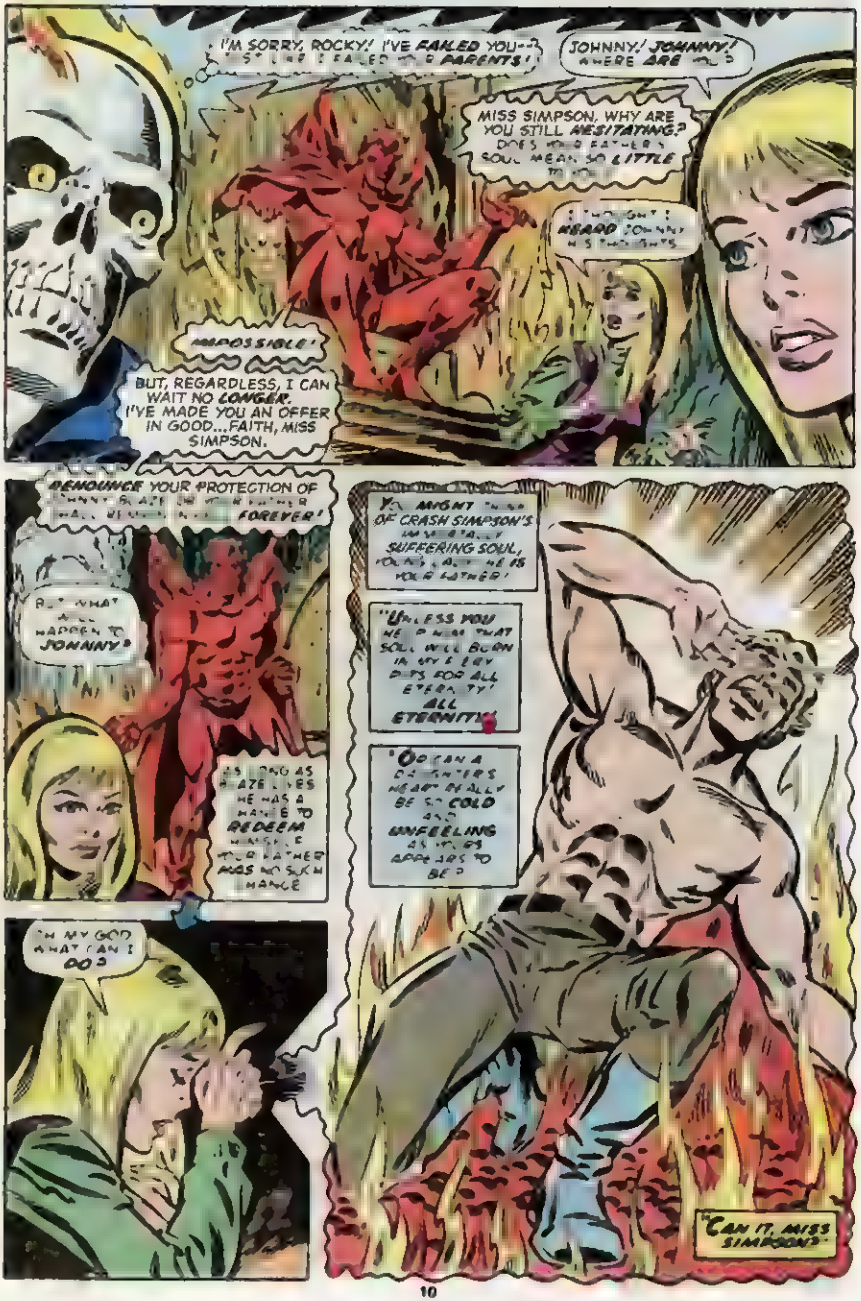
I'M SORRY, ROCKY! I'VE FAILED YOU--JUST LIKE I FAILED MY PARENTS!
JOHNNY! JOHNNY! WHERE ARE YOU?
MISS SIMPSON, WHY ARE YOU STILL HESITATING? DOES YOUR FATHER'S SOUL MEAN SO LITTLE TO YOU?
I THOUGHT I HEARD JOHNNY'S VOICE!
IMPOSSIBLE!
BUT, REGARDLESS, I CAN WAIT NO LONGER. I'VE MADE YOU AN OFFER IN GOOD...FAITH, MISS SIMPSON.
RENOUNCE YOUR PROTECTION OF JOHNNY BLAZE AND HIS FATHER AND WITNESS HIS SUFFERING FOREVER!
BUT WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO JOHNNY?
AS LONG AS BLAZE LIVES HE HAS A CHANCE TO REDEEM HIMSELF. HIS FATHER HAS NO SUCH CHANCE
YOU MIGHT THINK OF CRASH SIMPSON'S IMMORTAL SUFFERING SOUL, YOU'RE JUST LIKE HE IS YOUR FATHER!
"UNLESS YOU HELP HIM THAT SOUL WILL BURN IN MY LOVE DOTS FOR ALL ETERNITY' ALL ETERNITY!"
"HOW CAN A DAUGHTER'S HEART REALLY BE SO COLD AND UNFEELING AS HERS APPEARS TO BE?
OH MY GOD WHAT CAN I DO?
"CAN IT, MISS SIMPSON!"

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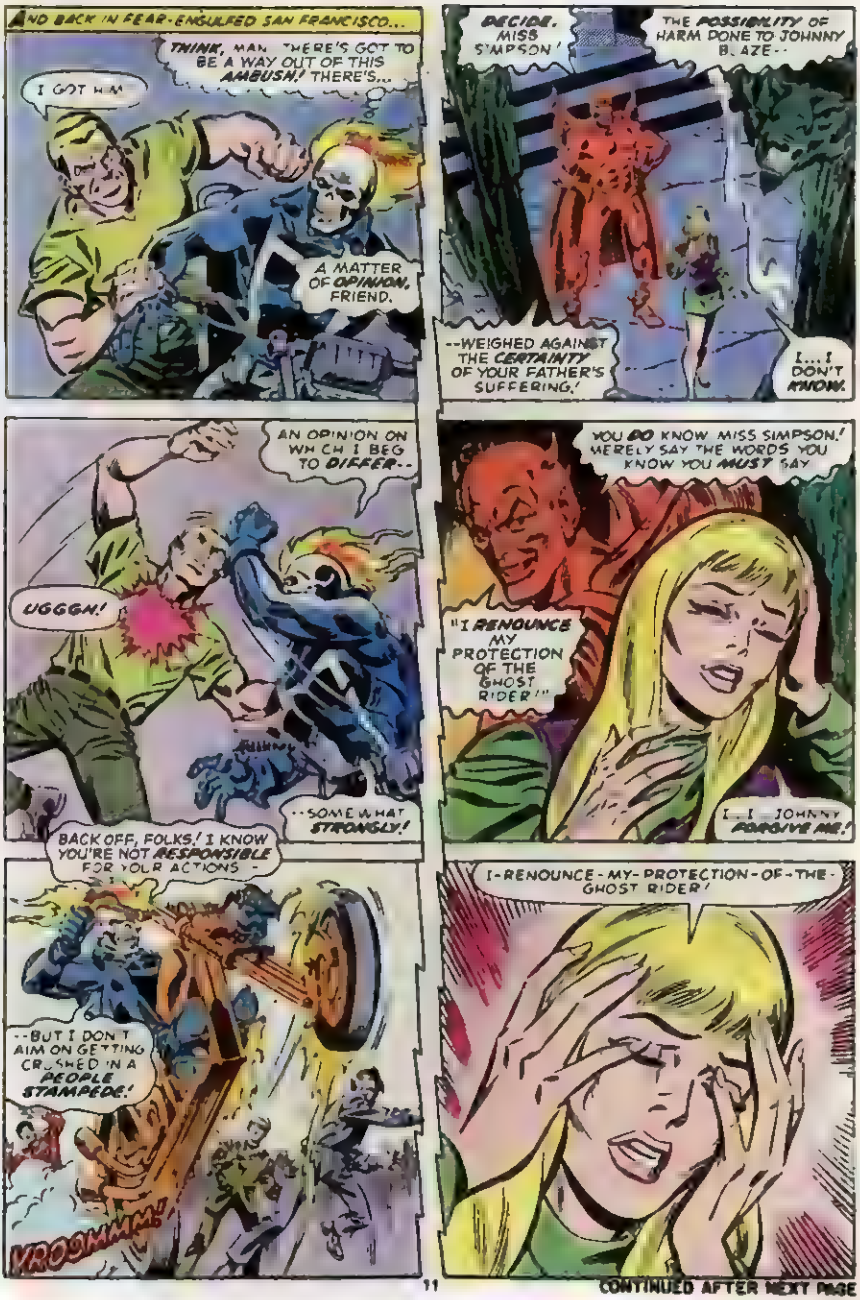
AND BACK IN FEAR-ENSULFED SAN FRANCISCO...
THINK, MAN, THERE'S GOT TO BE A WAY OUT OF THIS AMBUSH! THERE'S...
I GOT HIM
A MATTER OF OPINION, FRIEND.
DECIDE, MISS SIMPSON!
THE POSSIBILITY OF HARM DONE TO JOHNNY BLAZE--
--WEIGHED AGAINST THE CERTAINTY OF YOUR FATHER'S SUFFERING!
I...I DON'T KNOW.
AN OPINION ON WHICH I BEG TO DIFFER--
UGGGH!
--SOMEWHAT STRONGLY!
YOU DO KNOW MISS SIMPSON! MERELY SAY THE WORDS YOU KNOW YOU MUST SAY
"I RENOUNCE MY PROTECTION OF THE GHOST RIDER!"
I...I JOHNNY FORGIVE ME!
BACK OFF, FOLKS! I KNOW YOU'RE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR ACTIONS --
--BUT I DON'T AIM ON GETTING CRUSHED IN A PEOPLE STAMPEDE!
VROOMMM!
I-RENOUNCE-MY-PROTECTION-OF-THE-GHOST RIDER!

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

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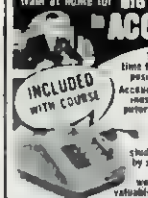

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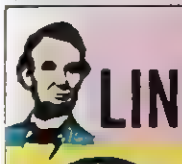

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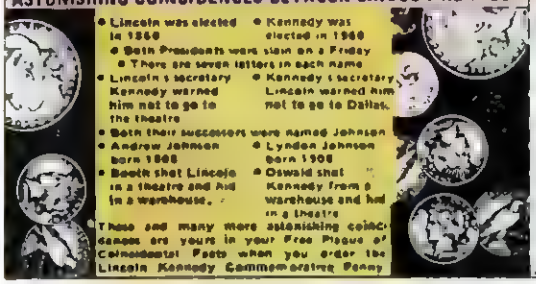

- Lincoln was elected in 1860
- Kennedy was elected in 1960
- Both Presidents were slain on a Friday
- There are seven letters in each name
- Lincoln's secretary Kennedy warned him not to go to the theatre
- Kennedy's secretary Lincoln warned him not to go to Dallas.
- Both their successors were named Johnson
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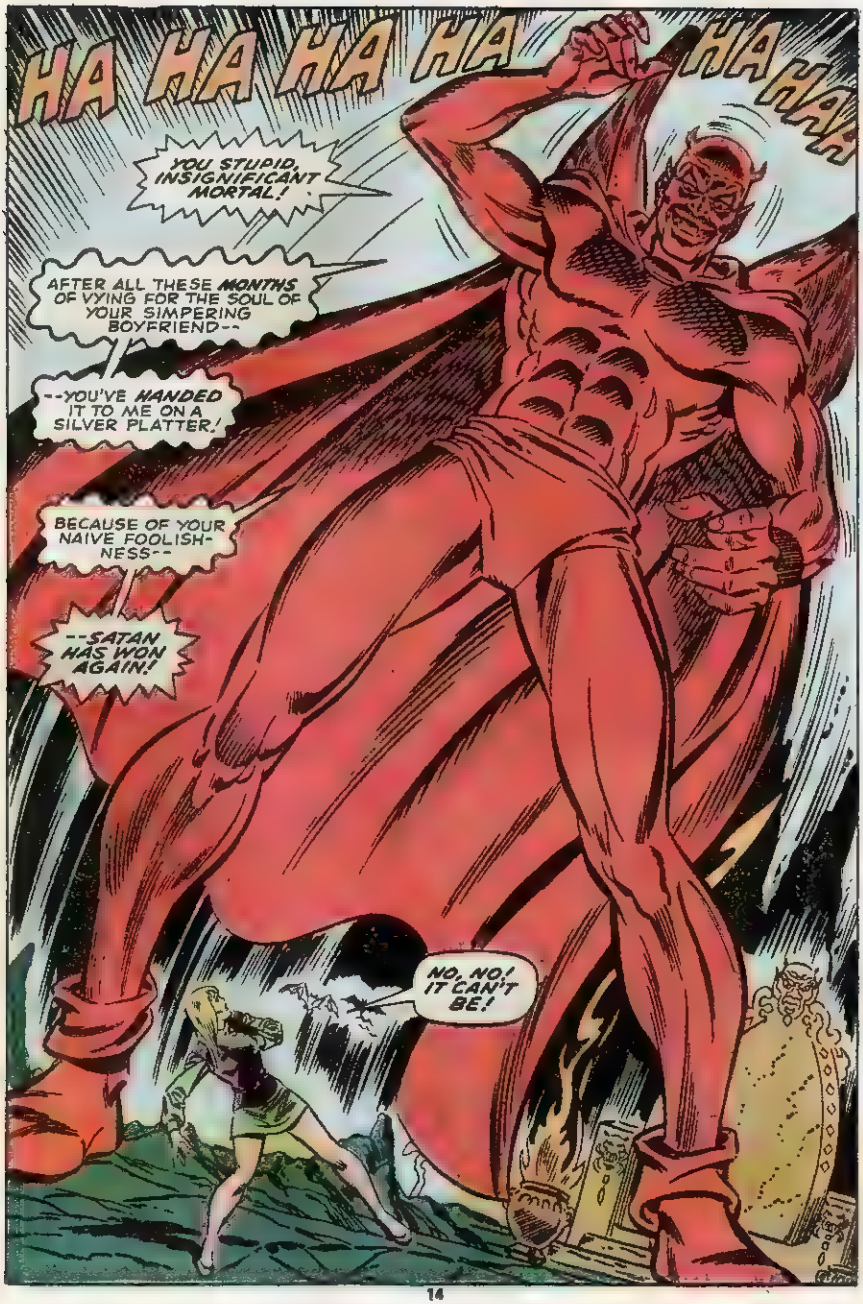
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA
YOU STUPID, INSIGNIFICANT MORTAL!
AFTER ALL THESE MONTHS OF VYING FOR THE SOUL OF YOUR SIMPERING BOYFRIEND--
--YOU'VE HANDED IT TO ME ON A SILVER PLATTER!
BECAUSE OF YOUR NAIVE FOOLISHNESS--
--SATAN HAS WON AGAIN!
NO, NO! IT CAN'T BE!

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I NEVER HAD A CLAIM ON YOUR FATHER'S SOUL. FROM THE MOMENT HE DIED, HE WAS BEYOND MY GRASP.
THE CRASH SIMPSON YOU HAVE BEHELD SINCE THEN WAS, MY DEAR, NOTHING MORE THAN AN...ILLUSION!
NO! YOU'RE LYING!
I'M THE DEVIL, MISS SIMPSON. EVERYTHING I SAY IS A LIE INCLUDING THAT BUT REGARDLESS--
--YOU HAVE RENOUNCED JOHNNY BLAZE!
SURGE!
AND THAT PUTS HIM IN MY POWER!
FIRST, I SHALL REMOVE THE GIFTS I GRANTED THE UNGRATEFUL MAN WHEN HE BARTERED HIS SOUL TO ME.
UGHHN!
"I WONDER HOW HE'LL REACT TO THAT--ESPECIALLY IN HIS PRESENT STATE."
SOMETHING HIT ME.. SOME KIND OF BLAST... BUT IT DIDN'T COME FROM INFERNO!
I'M LOSING CONTROL OF THIS FLAME-CYCLE.
THAT'S NEVER HAPPENED BEFORE.
IT'S DIS-APPEARING--
--RIGHT OUT FROM UNDER ME!
I HAVE TO BRACE MYSELF FOR A

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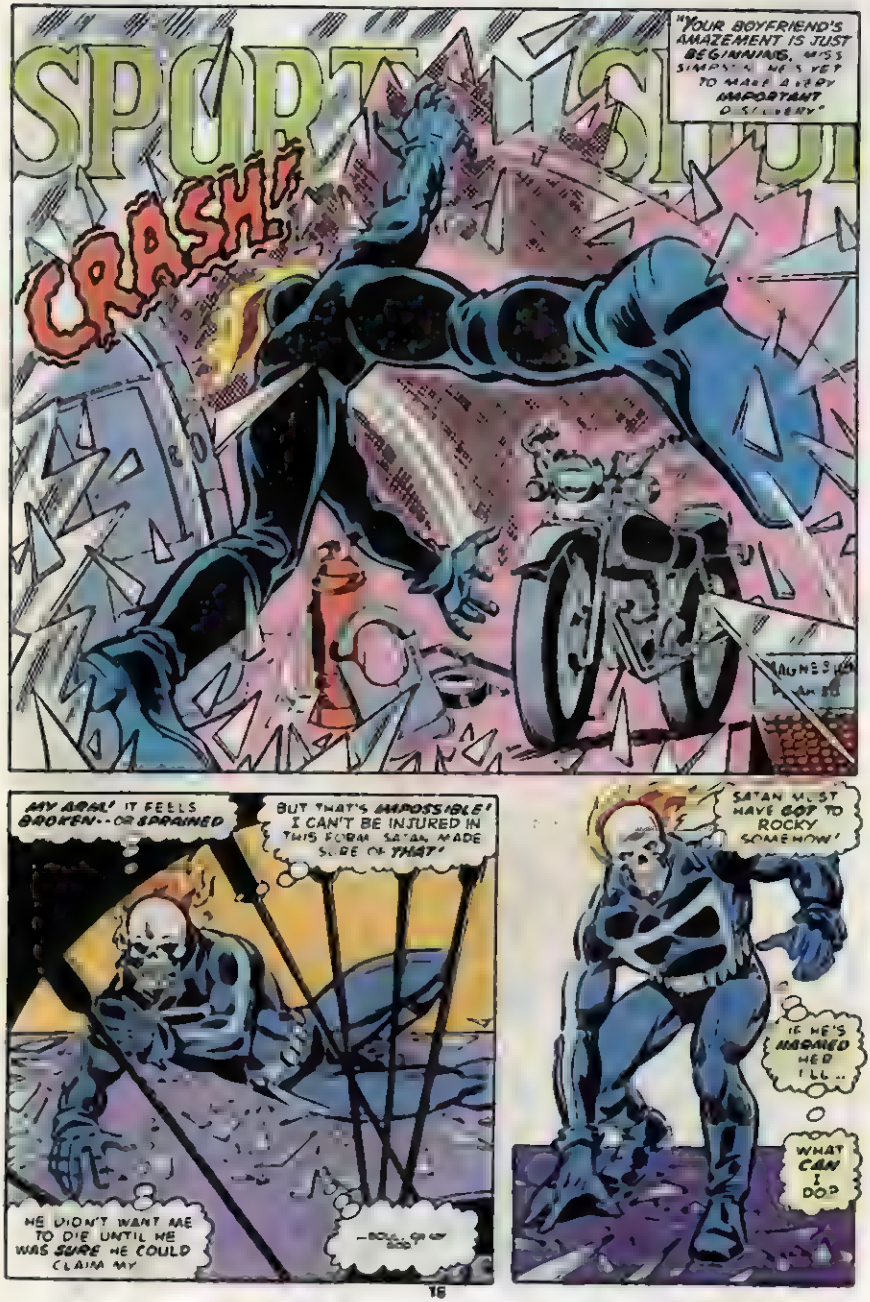
SPORTSMASTER
"YOUR BOYFRIEND'S AMAZEMENT IS JUST BEGINNING, MISS SIMPSON! HE'S YET TO MAKE A VERY IMPORTANT DISCOVERY"
CRASH!
MY ARM! IT FEELS BROKEN--OR SPRAINED
BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! I CAN'T BE INJURED IN THIS FORM SATAN MADE SURE OF THAT!
HE DIDN'T WANT ME TO DIE UNTIL HE WAS SURE HE COULD CLAIM MY
—SOUL, OR MY GOD!
SATAN MUST HAVE GOT TO ROCKY SOMEHOW!
IF HE'S HARMED HED I'LL...
WHAT CAN I DO?

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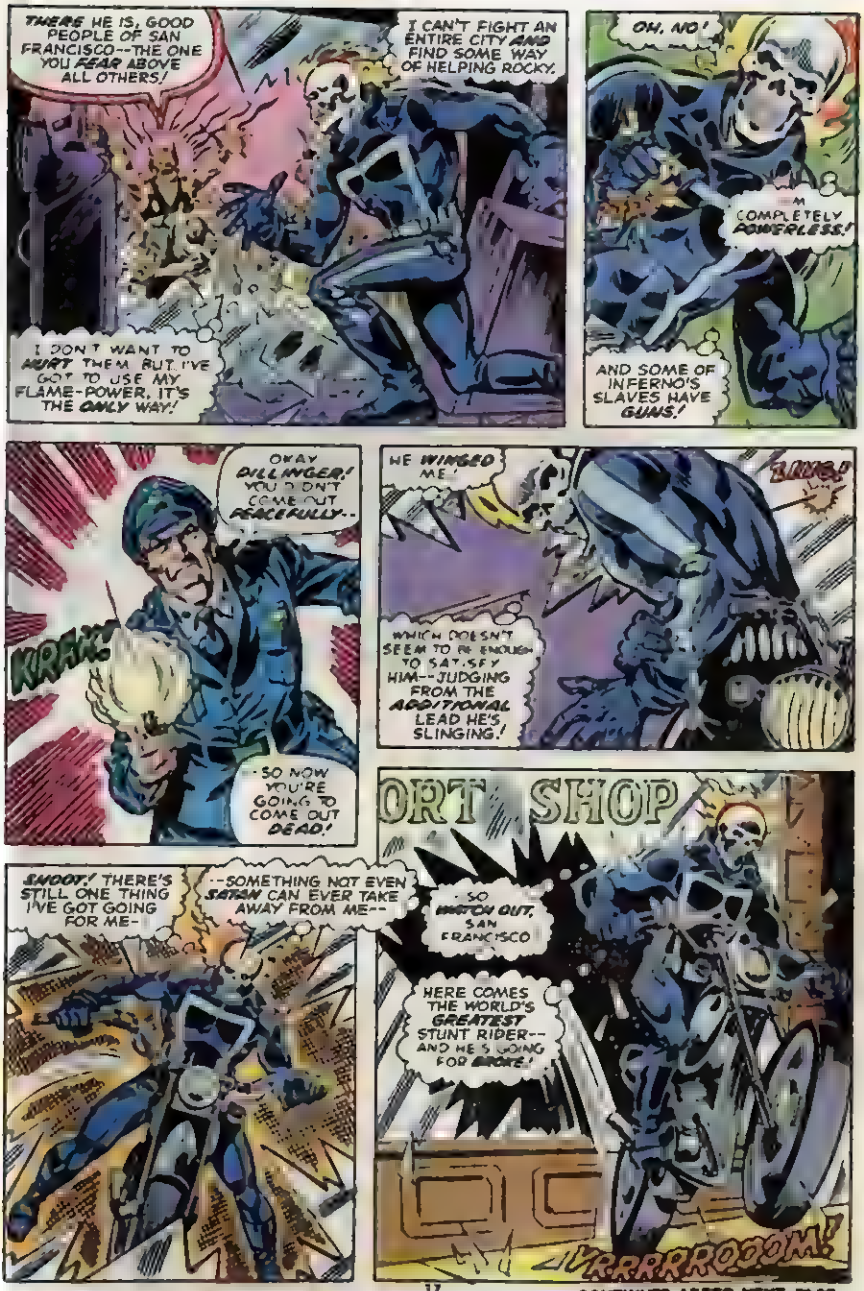
THERE HE IS, GOOD PEOPLE OF SAN FRANCISCO--THE ONE YOU READ ABOVE ALL OTHERS!
I CAN'T FIGHT AN ENTIRE CITY AND FIND SOME WAY OF HELPING ROCKY.
I DON'T WANT TO HURT THEM BUT I'VE GOT TO USE MY FLAME-POWER, IT'S THE ONLY WAY!
OH, NO!
I'M COMPLETELY POWERLESS!
AND SOME OF INFERNO'S SLAVES HAVE GUNS!
OKAY DILLINGER! YOU DON'T COME OUT PEACEFULLY--
KRAK!
--SO NOW YOU'RE GOING TO COME OUT DEAD!
HE WINGED ME!
BLAM!
WHICH DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ENOUGH TO SATISFY HIM--JUDGING FROM THE ADDITIONAL LEAD HE'S SLINGING!
ORT SHOP
SHOOT! THERE'S STILL ONE THING I'VE GOT GOING FOR ME--
--SOMETHING NOT EVEN SATAN CAN EVER TAKE AWAY FROM ME--
--SO WATCH OUT, SAN FRANCISCO
HERE COMES THE WORLD'S GREATEST STUNT RIDER--AND HE'S GOING FOR BROKE!
VRRRROOOM!

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

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GHOST WRITERS!

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP, 575 MADISON AVE. N.Y.C. 10022

GHOST RIDER #7 with "And Lose His Own Soul" was very good, but not great.

The Stunt Master was a good guest-star. I liked the way he acted on impulse to aid G.R. Stunt-Master is a man who isn't afraid to get involved.

Jim Mooney did a good art job on this action-packed tale, although my favorite G.R. artist is originator Mike Ploog.

Tony Isabella has written one of the best Ghost Rider stories in a long time. It had plenty of superhero action, but it was somewhat lacking in supernatural mood. This supernatural mood is hard to explain, but Gary Friedrich used to capture it well, although usually at the expense of some action. What really marred the story for me was the unsatisfactory ending.

Ghost Rider did not defeat the One-Man Zodiac with his own prowess. It was actually Satan's demon that defeated the villain. The "Zodiacal year" cheat was interesting, but I would have preferred to see Ghost Rider zap the villain.

I'm not excited by the prospect of Satan next issue. I find the Zodiac Killer more interesting. Satan is a good villain but terribly overused. I know Satan is thematically connected to the series, but it's like using Dr. Doom for the villain in 100 consecutive issues of FANTASTIC FOUR. Anyone would get tired of that after a while.

Bob Hobart
7741 Dahlia Dr.
Mentor, Ohio 44060

As you know, Bob, if you've read the conclusion of this issue's yarn, Satan's appearance in GHOST RIDER # 8 was intended precisely to prevent a hundred-issue–long unresolved battle 'twixt our Cycle Spook and the Lord of the Netherworld. Though we're not abandoning his thematic connection to this strip, you'll be seeing far less of Satan "in person" as time goes on. Which is, we think, exactly what you wanted.

We really got a kick though, from your line about the Devil being "a good villain but terribly overused." Like, it's not our fault he can't keep himself out of trouble. We really didn't create him, you know!

Dear Marvel,

I have just finished reading GHOST RIDER #7 and think it is one of G.R.'s best adventures yet! Jim Mooney has done a fair job on the art. Tony Isabella did a super job writing this Zodiac episode. Bringing in the Stunt-Master was a great idea, and I would like to see more of him.

Now, I have a question. In G.R. #6, page 30, panel six, it says that Samuel Phillips works at the Golden Gate Trust, and in the next panel, "Taurus" breaks in. Then, on the first page of G.R. #7, "Taurus" breaks out of the First Federal Bank! What gives?

Chuck Rice
East Lansing, Mich.

The First Federal Bank, Inc., had been trying for months to buy out the owners of the Golden Gate Trust Company. When the President of G.G.T. saw Taurus come crashing in, he immediately signed a bill of sale, took the best offer he could get, and cleared out. The new management, eager to start doing things their way, had their sign up outside even before Taurus could break out. (Either that— or we goofed.)

As for Stunt-Master, Tony tells us he'll be a semi-regular member of the supporting cast in GHOST RIDER from now on...and you'll learn why and how in the next issue or two, as a whole new life begins for both Johnny Blaze and his flame-skulled alter ego.

Dear Marvel,

To begin with, I do not buy GHOST RIDER regularly. I picked up the latest issue out of curiosity, saw that Tony Isabella was the writer, and decided to buy it and check it out.

And I admit I found it interesting to read and am curious about the second Zodiac team.

But my main reason for writing is the letters section. (If the next few letters pages are as interesting as this, I'll continue buying GHOST RIDER for a while. There was a time when I bought CAPT. AMERICA only for the letters sections, but that was pre-Steve Englehart.)

Concerning the debate on whether the Ghost Rider is a hero or a villain: I dug out the few back issues I have and re-read them to see what I could see. And my conclusion is yes, *he is a hero in the sense that he has fought some baddies and has saved Roxanne's life a few times.*

However, the fact that he has also violated a number of laws whenever it suited his needs makes him a villain in the legal sense (some of Marvel's villains have been bad guys without actually breaking any laws).

Ghost Rider is an anit-hero, sometimes bending or stretching the law when need be, more so than any others of your heroes, in order to fight the mighty powers of evil. He is an "outlaw," but not a true criminal.

I do not mean to justify his actions, however. It is my belief that G.R. is truly mad. (He seemingly gets no sleep, which would increase his madness.)

Also, I'd like to add that I've been a student of the occult for some time (as with the martial arts, I was studying the occult before it became faddish), and I personally do not believe in Satan. So there!

Blackwolf
76 West Valley Road
Lake Placid, N.Y. 12946

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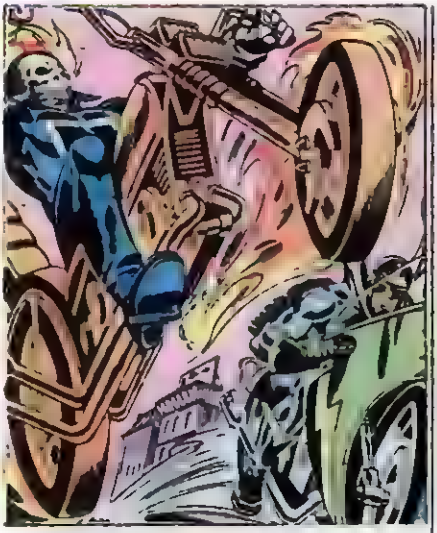


That's okay Blackwolf. Daimon Hellstrom tells us his father doesn't believe in you! (So where?)

Anyway, you've added a whole new dimension to this debate on whether G.R. is a hero or villain...and precisely what the criteria are for assigning one or the other of those tags to a character. As you pointed out, a lawbreaker need not necessarily be termed a "villain." It depends a lot on which laws he breaks— and why. And one need not break laws to be a villain, either. (Nebulon in the DEFENDERS mag, for example, bought the earth. There's no law against that, but it tends to stamp him as something other than heroic.) And there might even be times when upholding the letter of the law, while ignoring its spirit, could be termed villainous.

But never mind all that. The thing that really got to us was the bit about Johnny Blaze never getting any sleep. If that were true, you'd undoubtedly be correct— he would go insane. But, as he seems to be quite in control of his faculties when in his fully human identity, there must be another explanation. And there is. What if the Ghost Rider is a somnabulant superhero— a sleep-walker?!?

It's just a wild hypothesis, and we'll leave it up to Marvel-dom Assembled to delineate it further, but we couldn't resist tossing it out for your collective consideration.

Dear Marvel,

Now, just stop it! In GHOST RIDER #6 & 7, you are perpetuating the mistake that has been made in THE AVENGERS every time the Zodiac has been trotted out. Somewhere along the line, the costumes of Sagittarius and Aquarius have become confused.

You have Sagittarius with the glyph of *Uranus* on his chest, when, since antiquity, the planet *Jupiter* has always represented Sagittarius. Instead, you have the glyph of *Jupiter* on the chest of Aquarius, which, though in antiquity was ruled by Jupiter, is today ruled by the planet *Uranus!*

Will you please get this straightened out before I lose my mind?

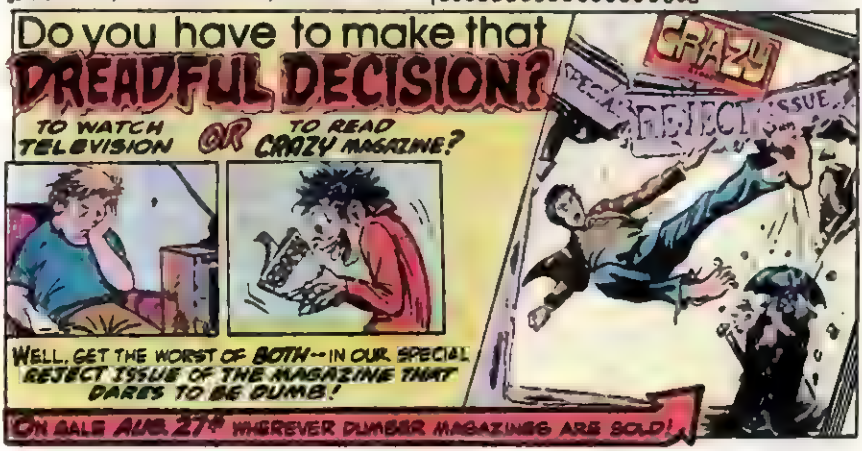
Robert Dolphin
40 West 96th St.
New York, N.Y. 10025

We'll try, Bob, the next time Zodiac appears— though Steve Englehart has promised all new costumes for the group the next time they pop up. (And who knows? By then we could get the glyph of the Kree Galaxy on Aquarius and the flag of the Skrull empire on Sagittarius!)

THIS IS IT! YOUR

MARVEL VALUE STAMP

FOR THIS ISSUE!
CLIP 'EM AND COLLECT 'EM'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NOTES AND NEWS ON A RESTFUL OF NEWSHES!

STAN LEE'S SOAPBOX

Boy! I was so long-winded last ish, telling you all about our mighty Marvel Calendar and the great new ORIGINS OF MARVEL COMICS, both of which ought to be on sale right about now, as well as our HITLER documentary mag, plus NOSTALGIA ILLUSTRATED, and the TREASURY OF SPIDER-MAN, that I promised Roy and the gang I'd stifle myself a little this time in order to leave them a few paragraphs to tell you about the zillion other wonderments from the hallowed halls of Marvel!

So, in order to give you a breather — and let the Bullpen carry the ball — I'll just take a minute to mention what a great time I had lecturing at the University of New Hampshire recently, and what a kick it was to receive the Popular Culture Association's Award of Excellence a few weeks ago in Milwaukee. You should have seen upwards of two thousand college students, professors, deans, and other dwellers in the rarified atmosphere of academia praising the merit and the miracle of Marveldom! Verily, 'twas a fete to remember! I can hardly tell you what a great source of satisfaction it is to know that, with your help, we've made the art of comic-books widely respected, universally accepted, and avidly acclaimed both here and overseas. Yep, I've gotta admit it — we're a great team, you and your blushin' Bullpen!

And now, unless Iron Man finds a pin-up of Aunt May in Conan's footlocker, I promise to clue you in on what's happening with our latest pulse-pounding project — the feature-length, live-action Spider-Man movie now in preparation — the next time we meet!

Excelsior!

Stan

ITEM! We know it's a wee bit late, for those of you who've already picked up on our-litin" lineup of 75¢ and $1 magazines — and who *hasn't*? — but we thought we'd best clue you in officially. Ye Editor-in-Chief (that's ROY THOMAS, for you old-timers out there) has formally appointed a couple of new Editors to help him out with our ever-burgeoning titles. First there's Marvelous MARV WOLFMAN, who's being kept busy with DRACULA LIVES, VAMPIRE TALES, and our zestfully zany CRAZY Mag, while Roy himself keeps his hand in with SAVAGE TALES, SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN, and our new science-fiction mag, the first issue of which (tentatively titled WORLDS UNKNOWN, Vol. 2, No. 1, last time we looked) should be on sale even as we speak! That leaves TONY "The Tiger" ISABELLA, aided and abetted by Cheerful CHRIS CLAREMONT, to preside over the bulk (and we do mean *bulk*!) of black-and-white masterpieces. And wouldn't you know that, with no less than four guys working fulltime, there's still more than the poor guys and our overworked production staff can handle!

ITEM! Let's hear a hearty "Welcome Aboard!" for a contingent of dynamic new artists who hail from the far-off Philippines, and who're adapting by leaps and bounds to the Mighty Marvel style of dramatic storytelling! First, there's Tremendously-Talented TONY deZUNIGA, who's currently earning hordes of new fans illustrating tales of Dracula and the Golem, as well as embellishing the Ka-Zar epics in SAVAGE TALES. Next, there's Awesome ALFREDO ALCALA, already earning kudos in the pages of ZOMBIE, SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN, and elsewhere (Alfredo, believe it or don't, pencils and inks some sixty pages per month of beautiful, finely-detailed artwork). Thirdly, there's Stamin' SONNY TRINIDAD, whose Morbius and Dracula stories soon will chill you to the marrow — and then there's Startling STEVE GAN, whose "Brak the Barbarian" sagas in SAVAGE TALES are setting sword-and-sorcery fandom on its collective ear! In addition, there are several other up-and-coming young artists who will soon be thrilling you in the pages of our back-and-white blockbusters — all presided over, at our Eastern-Hemispheric Branch, by Tony's ever-lovin' spouse MARY deZUNIGA, who keeps all those pandemonious pages moving across the wide Pacific. They're all knocking themselves out, so let them — and us — know how you feel about their efforts in the months to come, okay?

ITEM! Here's a hale-and-hearty hello to DAVID ANTHONY KRAFT (hereinafter referred to as DAVE), who's piped himself aboard to help Dauntless DON McGREGOR proofread all our color comics. Not only is Dave a scripter to watch in his own write, as someone once said, but he's also a demon *literary* agent in his spare time! Don and Dave are backed up, in turn, by Roy's new Person Friday, Impish IRENE VARTANOFF, who's been active in fan circles for years and who's now overseeing our rhapsodic reprints and letters pages (when she isn't working on her Master's Thesis, that is — nobody rests at night among the batty Bullpen!). Like we said — welcome, one and all!

ITEM! It's not all unmitigated good news this month, though. Both DON HECK and GIL KANE's lovely wife ELAINE were in separate auto accidents, from which they're both recuperating (and doing nicely, we're overjoyed to say). Likewise, Lethal LARRY HAMA burned his fingers slightly in a freak electrical accident at the studio he shares with DICK GIORDANO, NEAL ADAMS, RALPH REESE, and others. Dick, Neal, et al. stepped in like troopers to help him finish off the current Iron Fist episode — for which thanks, both from us and from the legion of kung-fu fans the world over! (Whew! And you wondered why editors get gray hairs!?)

ITEM! Anybody out there catch Big JIM HARMON, West-Coast Editor of our photo-filled MONSTERS OF THE MOVIES mag, on a recent edition of the NBC-TV show "Knowledge" — or else on a certain nationally-syndicated news program? It seems that, ever since we hired J.H. to edit the magazine, he's been simultaneously discovered by the media men of the land, as well! (Just keep pluggin' M.O.M., Jim — not that you need any hints from us!)

ITEM! Can't resist sneaking in a plug for our newest nutty nonsense mag — for those of you who've made CRAZY the toast of the town (mainly, Hoboken, New Jersey). This one's for those of you who like your humor flavored with a touch of the *macabre* — a hint of the *horrible* — a pinch of the mysterious. And — are you ready for this? — the name of our new chills-and-chuckles sensation is . . . ARRGH! (No, Irving, that's not our reaction to it, that's the title: ARRGH! Pick up a copy today — and go ARRGH yourself! 'Nuff said!

Just a last-minute reminder that the MIGHTY MARVEL CALENDAR FOR 1975 is just going on sale in real live bookstores from coast to coast! We think you'll find it $3.95 well-spent (how's that for soft sell?). But, you know muddled-up Marvel: we always have to let a typo or two sneak thru, just to give you something to hunt for. So, we'll offer a shiny new no-prize to the first dozen Calendar purchasers who spot which day of the year is accidentally printed twice (while one day was omitted entirely). No fair finding other booboos, now — you know how insecure we get!

ITEM! That's all we've got room for on *this* page — but there's an extra item or three on our Bullpen Bonus Page, elsewhere in this issue. We wouldn't want you to think we've been *idle* now, would we? See you there, Marvelophile!

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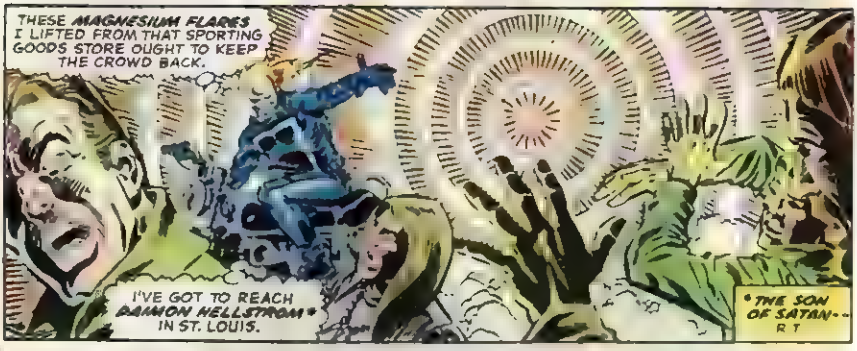
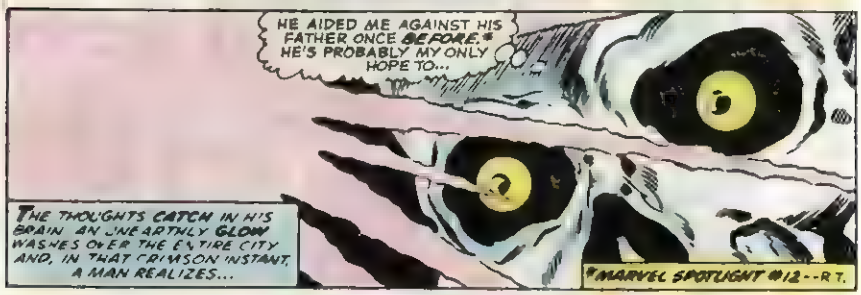
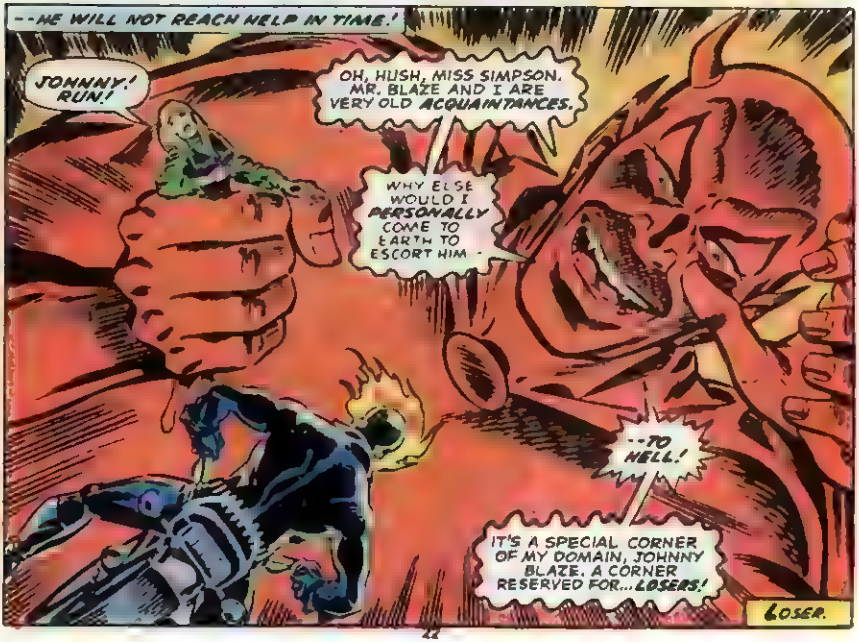

THESE MAGNESIUM FLARES I LIFTED FROM THAT SPORTING GOODS STORE OUGHT TO KEEP THE CROWD BACK.
I'VE GOT TO REACH DAIMON HELLSTROM* IN ST. LOUIS.
*THE SON OF SATAN--R T


HE AIDED ME AGAINST HIS FATHER ONCE BEFORE.* HE'S PROBABLY MY ONLY HOPE TO...
THE THOUGHTS CATCH IN HIS BRAIN. AN UNEARTHLY GLOW WASHES OVER THE ENTIRE CITY AND, IN THAT CRIMSON INSTANT, A MAN REALIZES...
*MARVEL SPOTLIGHT #12--R.T.


--HE WILL NOT REACH HELP IN TIME.'
JOHNNY! RUN!
OH, HUSH, MISS SIMPSON. MR. BLAZE AND I ARE VERY OLD ACQUAINTANCES.
WHY ELSE WOULD I PERSONALLY COME TO EARTH TO ESCORT HIM--
--TO HELL.'
IT'S A SPECIAL CORNER OF MY DOMAIN, JOHNNY BLAZE. A CORNER RESERVED FOR...LOSERS!
LOSER.

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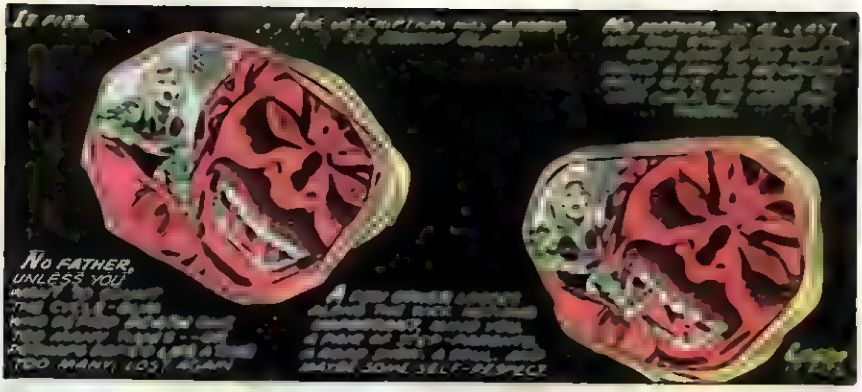
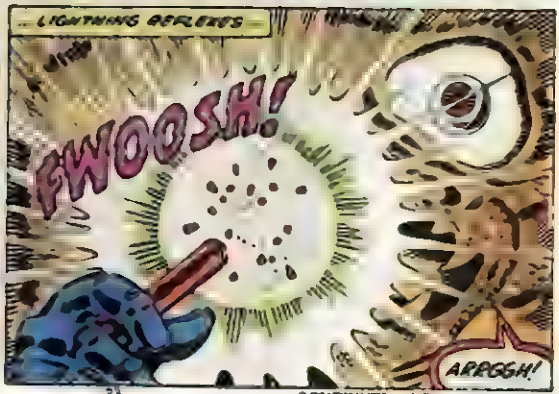


ESPECIALLY FOR A MAN WHO SEEMS LIKELY TO
YOUR FAITHFUL DEMON WAS THE MORTAL, MASTER. I ASK ONLY FOR
INFERNO! THE SIGHT OF SATAN HOLDING ROCKY SPOOKED ME SO MUCH I
BEHIND ME



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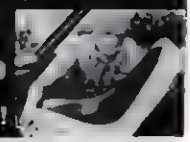

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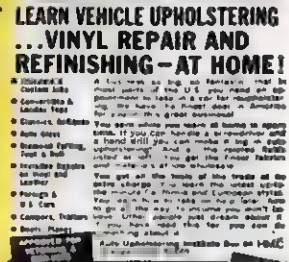

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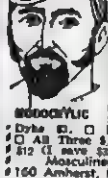

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...AND JUST PLAIN OLD-FASHIONED MUSCLE!
THOK!
BEFORE INFERNO RECOVERS HIS SIGHT!
GOT TO ROLL WITH THE FALL RECOVER MY BALANCE...
STOOM!
I CAN'T LET UP FOR A SECOND!
ZWAK!
BECAUSE THIS CHARMER HAS AT LEAST SIXTY OR SEVENTY POUNDS ON ME.
...AND I'M NOT ABOUT TO GIVE HIM A CHANCE TO USE THAT WEIGHT AGAINST ME!
THE ODDS ARE AGAINST JOHNNY BLAZE!
SLUG!
THE ODDS SAY INFERNO SHOULD TAKE HIM.
JOHNNY BLAZE BEATS THE ODDS
FLOP!
THE GHOST RIDER WINS...

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...A MINOR SKIRMISH
AN IMPRESSIVE DISPLAY, MORTAL...WHICH DOESN'T ALTER THE FACT THAT I HAVE COME FOR YOUR SOUL!
I'LL FIGHT YOU, SATAN--
--FOR ALL ETERNITY IF NEED BE--
--BUT YOU'LL NEVER CLAIM MY SOUL!
CRETIN!
ZAT!
IT IS ALREADY MINE!
YOUR SOUL WAS MINE THE NIGHT YOU SUMMONED ME TO SAVE CRASH SIMPSON--INSTEAD OF RELYING ON YOURSELF!
AND NOW THAT MISS SIMPSON HAS SO KINDLY RENOUNCED HER PROTECTION OF YOU--
--NOTHING STANDS BETWEEN ME AND THE POSSESSION OF THAT SOUL!
JOHNNY!
CAN'T MOVE--THAT BLAST PARALYZED ME!
YOU ARE WRONG, SATAN!
WHAT?! WHO DARES--!
AS LONG AS THERE ARE PEOPLE OF GOOD WILL ON THIS WORLD, SATAN--
--THEY SHALL ALWAYS STAND BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR INNOCENT VICTIMS.
JOHNNY BLAZE'S ONLY SIN WAS DESPAIR--

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

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BULLPEN BONUS PAGE! (WHAT ELSE?)

ITEM! Ever wonder why one writer or artist gives up a feature to another? Well, here's a case in point: At almost the same time recently that STEVE (Baby) GERBER got an overwhelming urge to write our DEFENDERS spectacular, it seems that Live-it-up LEN WEIN got a similar itch to script a lone-wolf superhero like DAREDEVIL. The first Ye Editor knew of it was when the pair marched into my office in tandem and said they'd like to trade books for a while; I figured each of 'em would bring a new and infectious enthusiasm to already-popular mags, so I okayed the deal. Ditto with Len and Merry GERRY CONWAY, who're trading writing chores on FANTASTIC FOUR and MARVEL TEAM-UP, mainly so that Ger can handle virtually all of the many Spider-Man pages which are unleashed by the House of Marvel every month. (All, that is, except those which are scripted by an obscure newcomer named JEANIE THOMAS — no relation to Ye Editor, except by marriage — for our nefarious new title, SPIDEY SUPER STORIES, published in conjunction with TV's Electric Company, big brother to Sesame Street!)

ITEM! It's the hit of fandom — in just one earth-shattering issue! Ordinarily, that's the kind of remark we'd be making about a *single* new title, right? But, in this case, it's equally true of *both* of our new one-dollar wonders, PLANET OF THE APES and THE SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN! Already, the artistry of PLOOG, TUSKA, and MOENCH is being hailed by gorillaphiles the world over; already, our swarthy Cimmerian (as interpreted by BUSCEMA, SMITH, and the like) has gained a new Hyborian Legion of enthusiastic admirers! And, with the second issues of these wondrous winners — now on sale — there can no longer be any doubt. It's the Marvel Age of Magazines as well as the Marvel Age of Comics! (And, if you're still nagged by any last, lingering doubts, just sneak a peak at what BUSCEMA and company are doing in SAVAGE TALES — at our steel-fisted DEADLY HANDS OF KUNG FU title, which is already going *monthly* by unprecedented popular demand — at our currently-debuting *science fiction* $1 mag which you've clamored for, long and loud—at our widely-acclaimed adaptation of Bram Stoker's classic novel in DRACULA LIVES — at Satana and at Gabriel, Devil-Hunter, in the pages of HAUNT OF HORROR — and at all the way-out wonderment in mags like ZOMBIE, VAMPIRE TALES, CRAZY, MONSTERS UNLEASHED, MONSTERS OF THE MOVIES, etc., etc., etc. — and maybe you'll get what we're driving at!)

See you next month, ol' buddy!

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- ☐ Broader shoulders
- ☐ Better posture

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Recent testimonials have shown that the musclebuilding know-how imparted in the Newest Bodybuilding method to be introduced to the North American market may really contribute towards building a well muscled, proportionate physique. This method, known as MUSCLE FIGHTER IV *has received much praise from those who have put it to the test. Gains in increased muscular body weight, loss of flab and the improvement of stamina have been little short of phenomenal. Reports from all over North America testify to the effectiveness of the* MUSCLE FIGHTER IV *plan*

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The MUSCLE FIGHTER IV *directors insist that there is no overnight method which can build huge muscles instantly. Gaining muscle size, firming up the body, and increasing strength all takes time and effort - But you as a man who may fit the requirements you may do it!*

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Sirs, my improvement has been great - What a course!
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"Dear Sir, I cannot believe the way I feel - This program has really opened my eyes."
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RICK THOMPSON, L.A. CA.

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"Super appearance - Super feeling - What more can I say - I am proud."
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The MUSCLE FIGHTER IV *plan is not recommended for those who are not perfectly fit and healthy, nor is it advised for those who are lazy indolent or lacking in initiative. This wonderful new program involves no special apparatus whatsoever. A* FREE *book describing how you may get started with this new method will be sent at once Simply fill in the coupon below! You may* NEVER *regret it! There is no obligation. Only those interested in physical improvement need apply. Limit one book per family. Send no money!*

SEND FOR FREE BOOK

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--AND THAT IS NOT SIN ENOUGH TO CONDEMN HIM TO YOUR DOMAIN.
LET ME HELP YOU GO, JOHNNY
NO, NO!
JOHNNY BLAZE'S SOUL IS BEYOND YOU, SATAN.
HE HAS EARNED HIS SECOND CHANCE
THE MORTAL HAS NOT YET SEEN THE END OF THIS. I PROMISE YOU THAT
NO MAN LIVES HIS LIFE WITHOUT CONTENDING WITH YOU SEVERAL TIMES SATAN
JOHNNY BLAZE WON HIS FIRST BATTLE.
THE FUTURE IS UP TO HIM.
FOR NOW REMEMBER THAT HE IS FREE-- THAT YOU HAVE NO CLAIM TO HIS SOUL
TODAY HE IS FREE BUT THERE IS ALWAYS TOMORROW, CURSE YOU...
--AND I AM AS ETERNAL AS SIN ITSELF!
I'LL NOT FORGET THIS DAY!
SAN FRANCISCO AWAKES WITH THE APPARITION OF SATAN AND INFERNO. THOSE WHO ATTACKED THE GHOST RIDER WONDER DUMBLY WHAT THEY ARE DOING OUT THIS LATE AT NIGHT.
THE GHOST RIDER WONDERS ONLY ABOUT THE IDENTITY OF HIS MYSTERIOUS RESCUER.
HIS QUERY RECEIVES THIS REPLY.
"I AM A FRIEND."
AND NOTHING MORE
SOMEHOW, THAT IS ANSWER ENOUGH.

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EPILOGUE I

SEVERAL DAYS PASS. AND IN THAT TIME, TWO YOUNG PEOPLE TALK--OR TRY TO BETWEEN LONG MOMENTS OF SILENCE. THEY TALK AND THEY RATIONALIZE AND THEY EXCHANGE TENDER WORDS OF LOVE. THEY MEAN THEM. BUT, IN THE END, ONE OF THEM DECIDES THEY MUST PART.

OKAY, SO I STILL BECOME THE GHOST RIDER AT NIGHT. I TOLD YOU: IT'S NOT THE SAME AS BEFORE.

MOST OF MY POWERS ARE GONE. I'M NOT INVULNERABLE ANYMORE AND I CAN'T CREATE THINGS OUT OF FLAME.

WHY?

BECAUSE EVERY NIGHT I'M REMINDED OF WHAT I ALMOST DID TO YOU, JOHNNY. I CAN'T STAND THAT.

MAYBE I'M WEAKER THAN BEFORE, BUT I'M FREER --AND I BELIEVE THERE'S A REASON I STILL BECOME THE GHOST RIDER.

"I WANT TO FIND OUT WHAT THAT REASON IS.

"YOU CAN HELP ME."

"I CAN'T, JOHNNY."

DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND? I WAS WILLING TO LET SATAN TAKE YOUR SOUL!

YOU WERE TRICKED, THAT'S ALL. LIKE I WAS.

IT'S NOT THE SAME, JOHNNY.

WHEN THIS THING STARTED, MY "PURITY OF SPIRIT"--REALLY NAIVETE--PROTECTED YOU FROM SATAN.

NOT BAD FOR A YOUNG GIRL.

BUT THAT NAIVETE ALMOST DESTROYED YOU, JOHNNY.

THAT YOUNG GIRL HAS TO GO AWAY FOR A WHILE.

SHE'S GOT TO GROW UP.

SHE'S GOT TO BECOME A WOMAN.

IF SHE MAKES IT, SHE'LL BE BACK.

GOODBYE, JOHNNY.

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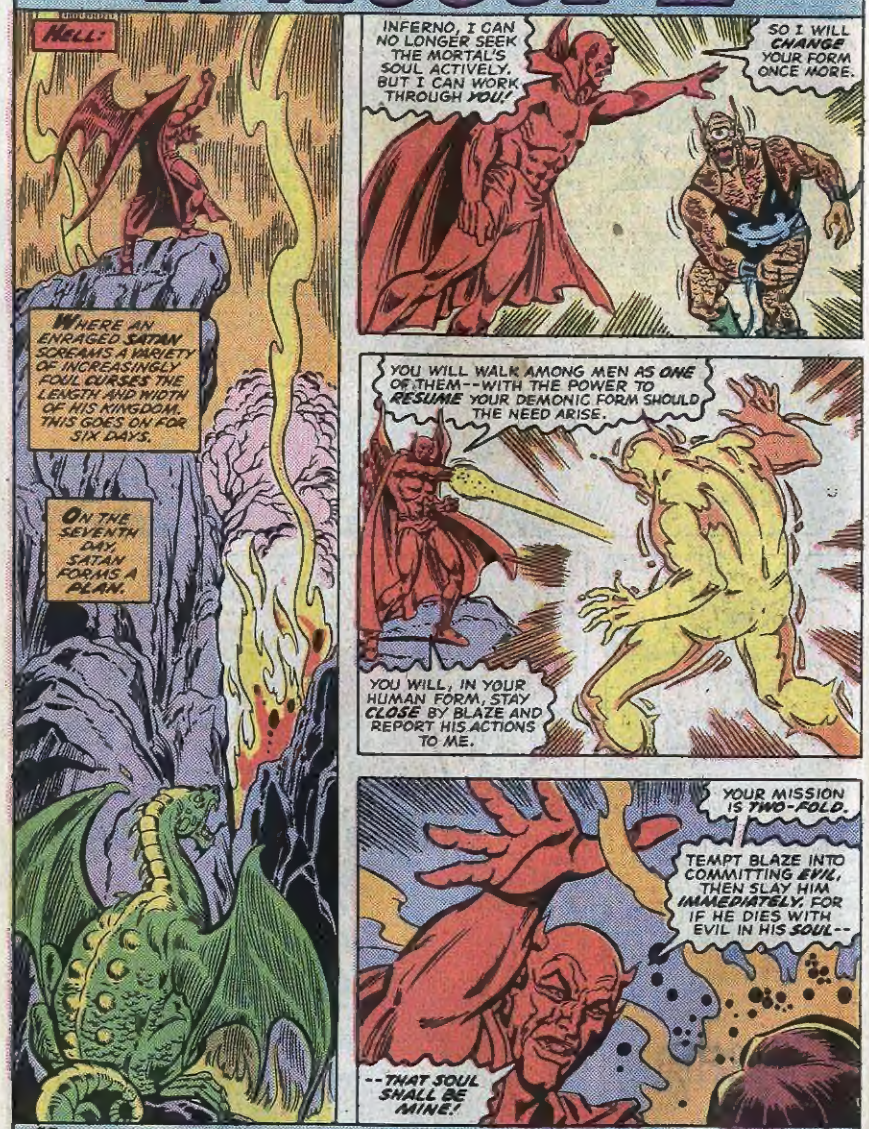
EPILOGUE II


HELL:
WHERE AN ENRAGED SATAN SCREAMS A VARIETY OF INCREASINGLY FOUL CURSES THE LENGTH AND WIDTH OF HIS KINGDOM, THIS GOES ON FOR SIX DAYS.
ON THE SEVENTH DAY, SATAN FORMS A PLAN.
INFERNO, I CAN NO LONGER SEEK THE MORTAL'S SOUL ACTIVELY. BUT I CAN WORK THROUGH YOU!
SO I WILL CHANGE YOUR FORM ONCE MORE.
YOU WILL WALK AMONG MEN AS ONE OF THEM--WITH THE POWER TO RESUME YOUR DEMONIC FORM SHOULD THE NEED ARISE.
YOU WILL, IN YOUR HUMAN FORM, STAY CLOSE BY BLAZE AND REPORT HIS ACTIONS TO ME.
YOUR MISSION IS TWO-FOLD.
TEMPT BLAZE INTO COMMITTING EVIL, THEN SLAY HIM IMMEDIATELY, FOR IF HE DIES WITH EVIL IN HIS SOUL--
--THAT SOUL SHALL BE MINE!

NEXT ISSUE: THE WILDEST MOTORCYCLE RACE OF ALL TIME AS THE GHOST RIDER MEETS--

THE INCREDIBLE HULK!

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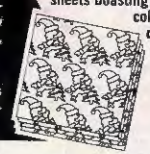

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